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HOW AND WHY I BECAME A CATHOLIC.

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A

# LETTER

TO

FRIENDS IN THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND,

BY

W. R. BROWNLOW, M.A.,

OF TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE. *K*

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*"As deceivers and yet true."* — 2 Cor. vi. 8.

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THE following pages are by no means intended as a defence of the Catholic Religion, but only as an explanation of what led the Author to embrace it. He has endeavoured to throw himself, as far as possible, back into the position he was in at the different times spoken of, and to give as faithfully as he could the light in which things then appeared to him. Divine things as well as the objects in a landscape wear a different aspect according to the position of him who looks at them. If the Author has seemed harsh or careless of the feelings of others, he must ask his reader to give him credit for not meaning to be so. And if Catholic doctrines be defectively stated, he trusts it will be charitably put down to his, as yet necessarily, very imperfect knowledge, and not to any wish to misrepresent the teaching of the Church to whose judgment he unreservedly submits.



# A LETTER

&c.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

IN the midst of the thankfulness which fills my heart when I reflect upon God's mercy in sending out His light and truth and leading me into the Catholic Church, I cannot forget that what is to me an increasing cause of joy is to many of you a cause of sorrow and perplexity. To some of you it is a matter of surprise. Others will congratulate themselves on the acuteness with which they predicted the event long ago. Some will grieve over the injury they believe it will do to the cause of truth. Others will rejoice that one whom they suspected to be a deceiver, has come out in his true colours. A few will have deep searchings of heart ; while the majority will strive to forget the matter altogether, and conclude that they have already treated the step taken by so insignificant an individual as myself with far greater consideration than it deserves. Still, the kindness with which you have always treated me so far beyond my own deserts, demands of me an explanation of the step I have felt it my duty to take, and the issue of this testimony I must leave in the hands of Him who calleth things that are not as though they were.

It will make what I have to say more intelligible if, before relating "*How and why I became a Catholic,*" I state briefly,

1st—What I have *not* done, and 2nd—What I *have* done in becoming a Catholic.

I. i. *I have not repudiated my Baptism* which converts are sometimes represented as having done by submitting to conditional baptism at the hands of the Roman Catholic Church. I have no reasonable doubt whatever that I was, through the kind care of my parents, duly baptised with water in the name of the Holy Trinity, when I was an infant. The doctrine of the Roman Church has ever been clear and decided, that such baptism by whomsoever administered, priest or layman, catholic, schismatic or heretic, or even infidel, when given with the intention of receiving the person into the Church, is valid and cannot be repeated without sacrilege. Why then, it will be asked, are converts re-baptised? If they themselves or any other Catholic can certify that the due form of baptism was used, the Church is satisfied. But the absence of any safeguard in a uniform method of administering baptism, and the fact of the careless practice of many Anglican clergymen has made it a grave matter of doubt in numerous cases whether the water has really touched the child or not. It is obvious that the Church could not inquire into the individual practice of every Anglican clergyman; she therefore judges it safer to administer baptism conditionally in all cases. This has been represented as intended to cast a slur upon the Sacrament when administered by Anglicans. The Catholic Church has no such intention as her public decrees shew\*, and her practice when once explained must commend itself to every reasonable mind.

ii. *I have not deserted the Church of my Baptism.* When I was an infant I was received "into the congregation of Christ's Church." I was made a member of Christ's mystical

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\* Si quis dixerit, baptismum, qui etiam datur ab hæreticis in nomine Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus Sancti, cum intentione faciendi quod facit ecclesia, non esse verum baptismum: anathema sit. Conc. Trid. Sess. vii. can. 4.

body; as the Apostle expresses it : "By one Spirit are we all baptised into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free." Some persons appear to imagine that they are baptised into the Church of England. I would ask of such : Suppose (which on your own principles is not impossible) that the Church of England were to be destroyed like the Church of Ephesus or Laodicea, where would you be then, if the Church of your baptism were to cease to exist ? I cannot say that this sentiment (for it is nothing more) ever had any weight with me. As soon as God's grace taught me what my baptism involved, my only anxiety was to know for certain which the Church of my baptism really was. The Church of England was a nurse to me, but she could not be my mother. I trust I shall ever be grateful for all the truths she taught me by her catechism, by her translation of the Bible, by her Prayer Book, and by her pious and learned clergy ; still I cannot forget that but for that which made the Church of England a distinct and separate body from all other Churches in the world, I should have been from my earliest childhood instructed in catholic doctrine and discipline; and when my eyes were once opened to see my true mother Church, I could not but escape from the ties which bound me to the Anglican Communion, and cast myself into the arms of the Mother of all the children of God.

iii. I have not by becoming a Catholic denied any grace vouchsafed to me throughout the whole course of my life. On the contrary I can see on looking back how wonderfully God's grace has striven with me, and saved me ! how in spite of my sins, it has made me the instrument of imparting grace and truth to others. I do not, and God forbid that I ever should, doubt the reality of that supernatural grace which sought me wandering as a lost sheep, which convinced me of my sins and of my unbelief and ingratitude towards Him who had loved me, and given Him-



self for me. I can only wonder and adore that persevering love which vouchsafed to grant me grace where I had no right to look for it, even amid the broken cisterns of Anglican rites. It is unaccountable to the eye of reason, but those who know anything of our Lord Jesus will not be surprised at His being still the merciful Great High Priest "who can have compassion on the ignorant and on them that are out of the way."

II.—*What I have done in becoming a Catholic.* I have in the most public and solemn manner possible renounced all participation in, and repudiated as a wicked and schismatical act all that was done by Henry VIII. and Elizabeth to separate England from the see of St. Peter, in which act every man is a partaker who declares in the words of the oath required of all Anglican clergymen: "that no foreign prince, person, prelate, state, or potentate, hath or ought to have, any jurisdiction, power, superiority, pre-eminence, or authority, ecclesiastical or spiritual, within this realm."

I have also repudiated all changes of doctrine that were made at the same time, and with my whole heart have openly professed my faith in the words of the creed of Pius IV. :—

"I, William Robert Brownlow, with a firm faith believe and profess all and every one of those things which are contained in that creed which the holy Roman Church maketh use of. To wit :—I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible: and in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages; God of God; Light of Light; true God of the true God; begotten not made; consubstantial with the Father, by whom all things were made. Who for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made Man. He was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate, suffered, and was buried. And the third day

He rose again according to the Scriptures : He ascended into heaven, sitteth at the right hand of the Father, and shall come again with glory to judge the living and the dead ; of whose kingdom there shall be no end. I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Life-giver, who proceedeth from the Father and the Son : who together with the Father and the Son, is adored and glorified ; who spake by the prophets. And in one holy Catholic and Apostolic Church. I confess one baptism for the remission of sins ; and I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

“I most steadfastly admit and embrace the apostolical and ecclesiastical traditions, and all other observances and constitutions of the same church.

“I also admit the holy Scriptures according to that sense which our holy mother the Church hath held and doth hold, to whom it belongeth to judge of the true sense and interpretation of the Scriptures : neither will I ever take and interpret them otherwise than according to the unanimous consent of the Fathers.

“I also profess that there are truly and properly Seven Sacraments of the new law, instituted by Jesus Christ our Lord, and necessary for the salvation of mankind, though not all for every one : to wit, Baptism, Confirmation, the Eucharist, Penance, Extreme Unction, Order, and Matrimony : and that they confer grace : and that of these, Baptism, Confirmation, and Order cannot be repeated without sacrilege. I also receive and admit the received and approved ceremonies of the Catholic Church, used in the solemn administration of the aforesaid sacraments.

“I embrace and receive all and every one of the things which have been defined and declared in the holy Council of Trent concerning original sin and justification.

"I profess likewise that in the Mass there is offered to God a true, proper, and propitiatory sacrifice for the living and the dead. And that in the most holy sacrament of the Eucharist there is truly, really, and substantially the Body and Blood, together with the Soul and Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ; and that there is made a conversion of the whole substance of the bread into the Body, and of the whole substance of the wine into the Blood; which conversion the Catholic Church calleth Transubstantiation. I also confess that under either kind alone Christ is received whole and entire, and a true sacrament.

"I constantly hold that there is a Purgatory, and that the souls therein detained are helped by the suffrages of the faithful.

"Likewise that the Saints reigning together with Christ are to be honoured and invoked, and that they offer prayers to God for us, and that their relics are to be had in veneration.

"I most firmly assert that the images of Christ, of the Mother of God ever Virgin, and also of other Saints, ought to be had and retained, and that due honour and veneration are to be given them.

"I also affirm that the power of Indulgences was left by Christ in the Church, and that the use of them is most wholesome to Christian people.

"I acknowledge the Holy, Catholic, Apostolic, Roman Church, for the mother and mistress of all churches; and I promise true obedience to the Bishop of Rome, successor of St. Peter, Prince of the Apostles, and Vicar of Christ.

"I likewise undoubtingly receive and profess all other things delivered, defined, and declared by the sacred canons and General Councils, and particularly by the holy Council of Trent. And I condemn, reject, and anathematise all things contrary thereto, and all heresies which the Church hath condemned, rejected, and anathematised.

"I, William Robert Brownlow, do at this present freely profess and sincerely hold this Catholic Faith, out of which no one can be saved : and I promise most constantly to retain and confess the same entire and inviolate, by God's assistance, to the end of my life."

After this solemn profession, our Lord Jesus Christ by the mouth of His appointed priest absolved me from the chain of excommunication by which I had been bound on account of heresy and schism, and restored me to the Communion and unity of the faithful, to the one Body in which the Holy Ghost dwells, and to the Holy Sacraments of the Church into which I had been baptised but from which I had been so long an alien.

I now come to the main subject of this Letter, viz. :—

*How and why I have become a Catholic.*

Here so many things crowd upon my memory that I hardly know where to begin, nor how to arrange what I have to say. At the risk of being not without reason accused of egotism, perhaps the simplest arrangement will be to relate how different truths have been brought home to me in various ways; and how, after trying every possible expedient to satisfy myself, I was at length constrained to come for "the light of life" to the only true representatives and ambassadors of Christ on earth, the priests of the Holy Roman Catholic Church.

The first thing that very strongly called forth my sympathies towards Catholic Truth was the cruel and wicked persecution of Miss Sellon and her devoted band of Sisters at Devonport. The coarse and unmanly abuse in which some of the so-called Evangelical clergy at that time indulged, gave me an abhorrence of what is popularly called Protestantism : although it was not until I had read Mr. R. Wilberforce's important works on the Incarnation, Baptism, and the Holy Eucharist, that I had any clear notions of the true nature of the Sacraments as

unfolded in the 5th Book of Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity. My views at the time of my entering the ministry, were, as may be supposed, exceedingly crude and defective ; and like most young clergymen I learned far more from my flock than I was able to teach them.

I speedily discovered that many a poor ignorant Methodist knew more of the things of God, of conversion of heart, of prayer, of spiritual joys and sorrows than I did ; and though my views about the Christian priesthood and sacraments were all true as far as they went, yet there was something wanting to make them come home to the hearts of these poor people. In common with most High Churchmen, I looked upon the doctrines of grace with great suspicion, and yet I was puzzled to find in Roman Catholic writers, as well as in the works of St. Cyprian and St. Augustine and other Fathers, the fullest recognition of the interior workings of grace in the soul. About this time a clerical friend of mine wrote a Letter on Conversion which made a deep impression upon me ; and all the experience of the early Evangelicals opened before me and excited my deepest sympathy. Adam's Private Thoughts was one of my favourite books. The memoir of the Rev. Robert Suckling was almost the only High Church book in which the doctrines of Conversion were clearly put forth ; and in my delight at finding what at once awakened a response in the hearts of the poor, I thought with him that I had discovered the secret of so many good men having "gone over to Rome" in search of what I believed I had found. A few months experience convinced me of my mistake.

I soon found myself regarded with suspicion by Evangelicals because I had not, in embracing vital religion cast off my former belief in Sacraments : while on the other hand High Churchmen suspected my views of conversion as a re-production of the errors of Luther or Wesley. I can never be sufficiently thankful that at this time, when I had really no

surer guide than my own crude ideas of the meaning of the word of God, I was led by an invisible Hand to study the acts of the Council of Trent. Those careful and precise definitions guarding the true doctrines of grace from the false exaggerations of Luther and Calvin, enabled me to see my way through many a difficulty, and saved me from falling into deadly heresy.

I must also confess with gratitude the obligations I am under to a clergyman whom I can never cease to love, who first taught me the essential difference between the highest forms of piety among Evangelicals and Dissenters, and the true interior life of the Saints. I feel as strongly as he does even now that if Dissenters and Evangelicals could once have their eyes opened to understand that Jesus the Word made Flesh is the Bread of Life, they would renounce their denial of sacramental grace, and humbly embrace the only means of being conformed to the image of the Son of God. The piety after which Evangelicals are striving is the piety of the Old Testament, and they and their Puritan forefathers have naturally adopted Old Testament saints as their models. Sanctity, that better thing which God in these last days hath provided for us, that supernatural life which is hid with Christ in God is regarded as an antiquated superstition or as a presumptuous attempt of man to save himself independently of Christ. Voluntary poverty, perpetual chastity, and implicit obedience, although taught by word and example by our Lord Himself; practised by Apostles and by a countless multitude of saintly men and women from St. Ignatius and St. Justin Martyr to the present day; these are considered as unfit for the enlightened religion of the nineteenth century\*, and the sad instances of broken vows which occur in all periods of

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\* I do not allude here so much to popular periodicals as to the expressed opinions of men of such high standing in the Church of England as Dr. Hook in his *Lives of the Archbishops*; I might almost add the Bishop of Oxford and Archdeacon Denison in the *Oxford Congress*.

Ecclesiastical history, are triumphantly paraded as evidences of the powerlessness of Divine Grace to exalt human nature into union with God.

Closely connected with the idea of sancity are the means appointed for the acquiring it. Holy Scripture and the Fathers uniformly teach that the only way to be a saint is to be fed on the Incarnate Word, not by mere mental realisation of His person and work, but by a real and substantial union with Himself in the Blessed Sacrament. The deep conviction of this great mystery bore me safely through the many forms of false spirituality with which I came in contact in my wanderings in search of truth.

But the more convinced I became of the dignity and importance of the Blessed Sacrament, the more acutely did I feel the uncertain language about it in the formularies of the Anglican Church, and the greater difficulty had I in believing, as I knew I ought to believe, concerning it. I remember as distinctly as if it happened yesterday, in the autumn of 1855, I was praying for greater faith in our Lord's presence, and desiring to follow Him whithersoever He goeth; when, in a moment, the Church of Rome was presented to my mind, and Jesus seemed to ask me, "Wilt thou follow me thither?" At the same moment all the consequences presented themselves—the loneliness, for I had not then a single Roman Catholic friend, and the severing of all the ties which unconsciously bound me to the religion of my fathers—and I had to confess with shame that I had not counted the cost. From that day until after my reception into the Catholic Church, I never had a happy communion. I was always haunted with the aching doubt that perhaps after all our Lord was not really there.

Now I do not wish to make more of this than it deserves. Interior calls often prove deceptive, because we know so little

how to distinguish the true voice of the Holy Spirit, from the whispers of false spirits, or the cravings of our own human spirit. It is often insinuated, by way of accounting for the fact of so many earnest-minded persons joining the Roman Catholic communion, that the personal sacrifices which it usually involves are the very inducemnets to an enthusiastic mind to assume that the step is one to which God has called him. There is some truth in this insinuation, and I can only say for myself, that I was alive to this possibility from the very first. At the same time it must ever be borne in mind that the path which indulges and gratifies our own self-indulgent nature, is *ceteris paribus*, less likely to be the heavenward course, than that which nature shrinks from.

In this particular instance, looking back at the state of mind in which I was at that time, I do not see any other way in which the voice of God would have been so likely to have been listened to by me, as its coming directly in prayer. Logical arguments, or even historical evidence I should have probably put aside as unspiritual and carnal reasoning. And God knew the surest way of reaching my heart. However, having no fixed external test by which to try the spirit whether it was of God, I thought on reflection that it might be either a temptation, or else only a test of my sincerity; and the only effect was to make me throw myself more fully into my work and by giving up the use of some devotional books—such as *Memoriale Vitæ Sacerdotalis*, which being by Roman Catholic Authors, I imagined might have indirectly influenced me—I hoped to get rid of all disquieting thoughts.

After a few months a dear friend of mine became a Catholic and I was completely driven out of my notion that persons only “went over to Rome” because they had not been able to find peace with God, and hoped to obtain it there. This notion seems very absurd to me now, as it will to all Catholics who may read this Letter; but it is not at all an uncommon



opinion among pious Protestants, most of whom know nothing whatever of what good Catholics are and readily believe the most strange things about them. Some of my other friends also became what is called "unsettled;" and though I said very little about my own misgivings, yet every doubt mentioned to me by others found a painful echo in my own heart. The "Denison Case" which was then pending made me see only too sadly that the living Anglican Church, *as a body*, did not believe in any Real and Substantial Presence of our Lord in the Holy Eucharist at all, however justly Archdeacon Denison and others might claim their right to interpret the Prayer Book and Articles in accordance with Catholic tradition. I shall have occasion to refer to this matter further on.

At the beginning of 1857, this teasing question, as I regarded it, was again forced upon my unwilling attention by some more of my personal friends becoming Catholics. I felt I could no longer refuse to consider it seriously, and therefore began to ask myself what solid reasons I had for not doing as my friends had done. The one chief question as it struck me at that time was that of *Infallibility*. Is the living church at this moment the infallible Teacher to whom all must submit? If so, there is only one Christian Church which claims to be infallible, the Roman Catholic Church. I saw this consequence quite clearly even then, for in the face of the 19th and 20th Articles of Religion, I could not deceive myself into believing the Church of England to be infallible. If "the Churches of Rome, Jerusalem, Alexandria, and Antioch have erred," it was evident that the Church of England might err, and it was possible that she had erred in the very matters upon which she separated from the rest of the Catholic Church. As, however, I still honestly believed that the Papal Supremacy and other Roman Catholic doctrines were unknown to antiquity, I fortified myself with Archer Butler's Reply to Dr. Newman's

Development\*, and thought that the written Word of God was the only infallible guide, and that nothing was to be taught as of faith which could not be plainly proved from scripture. I cannot say that this thoroughly Protestant idea ever really satisfied me, but I thought it did; and I wished to give my attention entirely to my parochial work and turn my mind from unsettling subjects.

My parochial work, however, brought up the subject again in a totally different form. I cannot sufficiently thank God for making me in the midst of my own perplexities an instrument of good to others. It was the Word of God, as far as I knew it, that I preached, and many sinners were awakened and came inquiring earnestly, "What must we do to be saved?" I remember once asking an Evangelical clergyman of great zeal and of some power as a preacher, what he should say to a man who came to him with the confession that he felt himself a great sinner and wanted to be saved. He said, "I should tell him that the Son of Man was come to seek and to save that which was lost, and that he must feel himself a *lost sinner*."

"Suppose," I replied, "he said he did feel himself *lost*?" "Then," said he, "I should tell him to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ." "Suppose he said he did believe in Him, but could not find any comfort or sense of safety?" "Then," said my friend, "I should tell him that the Lord was to be found in the means of grace. He must come to Church, attend the Lord's Table, and above all he must study the word of God." "But," I answered, "what if he could not read?" "I should tell him to learn to read," was my friend's conclusion.

Now I do not for a moment mean to say that such a miserable answer to a soul yearning for salvation, is all that Evangelicals know of the Gospel of which they talk so flu-

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\* My only knowledge of this celebrated work was from its critics. I have never yet read the work itself.

ently, but I never could find out that they had any more definite mode of exercising "the ministry of reconciliation." The Wesleyan Methodists have a much more decisive way of answering the question. They incite the inquirer who submits to their treatment to fervent cries for mercy until he feels within himself the happy emotions of confidence in his Saviour and love to God. No doubt many true acts of contrition have been thus elicited by the supernatural grace of God. I can bear witness to the consistent lives of many who have thus received a real change of heart. But my experience of Methodists and of Dissenters in general is that they shrink with a nervous dread from any deep examination of their past sins. I have known many "converted" people who, when the fact has dawned upon them that they were regenerated in their baptism, have been filled with confusion at the sight of their sins, and lost that peace of conscience which they had formerly enjoyed. When such cases came before me, what was I to do? Had the Church no provision for such as these?

I never could find any authority in the Holy Scripture for a minister of Christ to direct penitent sinners after the Evangelical or after the Wesleyan method. The apostles replied to such questions in a clear and definite way. They always gave directions for baptism or absolution as the means by which the blood of Jesus Christ was to be applied to the individual soul. And the Church of England, whatever her practice may be, certainly in the "Form and Manner of Ordering of Priests," in the "Order for the Visitation of the Sick," and in the exhortation in the Communion Service distinctly teaches "the benefit of Absolution." I knew that going to confession had been a blessing to myself; and though I was aware that I was in many respects most unfit to exercise this office, yet when directly applied to as I often was, I felt I had no right to refuse to exercise in behalf of those committed to me, that power which (if I were a priest at all) had been

conferred upon me. I had an uncomfortable fear that I might be acting presumptuously, but I saw that God was using my ministrations in this way to the consolation and purifying of souls, and I treated my misgivings as temptations.

The "Poole Case" opened my eyes to the danger I was incurring, and made me aware that I was not only liable at any moment to be held up to public execration, but that the very Bishop and Archbishop to whom I professed obedience would deny my right thus to exercise my ministry. Had I at that time known that it has been the doctrine of the Church from the earliest times, that no priest may give absolution without the license of the Bishop in whose diocese he may be to do so, I should probably have gone at once to the Bishop and resigned my curacy. High Churchmen think that the present Archbishop would decide differently if the "Poole Case" were to occur again. It may be so, but I know two clergymen who were both suspended by his Grace when Bishop of Ripon, for no other cause than that they heard confessions and gave absolution. The public have fair ground of complaint about the manner in which confessions are heard in the Church of England. There is no sort of protection against scandals which must arise while human nature remains what it is; and the Anglican Bishops appear to wish that their clergy should practically ignore the only sacerdotal power which is expressed in the Ordinal rather than excite popular Protestant indignation by erecting public confessionals or any other protection for clergy and their penitents.

Whilst I was thus unwillingly made to feel the strange anomalies of the Anglican system, the efforts I made to prevent the conversion of several more of my friends to the Catholic Church obliged me again to look at the claims which she had upon my allegiance.\* She was evidently either the church of

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\* *The trials of a mind in its progress to Catholicism*, by Dr. Ives, formerly Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church in North Carolina, awakened me to facts which I was never able satisfactorily to explain.

God or a vast system of falsehood. I thought if I could only succeed in proving one doctrine of the Roman Church to be false it would destroy her claim to infallibility, and I need pay no more attention to the subject. The doctrine of the Papal Supremacy appeared to me at once the most important and the easiest to investigate. Canon Wordsworth in his *Theophilus Anglicanus* had assured me that "it is certain that the *Bishops of Rome themselves for six hundred years*, were so far from knowing anything of such supremacy as residing in themselves or in any one else, that Pope Gregory the First denounced the title *Universal Bishop* as arrogant, wicked, schismatical, blasphemous, and anti-christian!!!" (p. 295.) By the help of Bishop Hopkins, who writes in a far more Christian spirit than the offensively contemptuous Bishop Barrow, I succeeded in convincing myself that his Holiness Pius IX. exercises a jurisdiction over all Roman Catholic Bishops which was not exercised in the very early ages of the church. Still, the question came back upon me that this was not enough. I had declared by my Oath of Supremacy that "no foreign prelate hath or ought to have any jurisdiction, power, superiority, pre-eminence, or authority, ecclesiastical or spiritual, within this realm."<sup>†</sup> To prove this it was necessary to shew that the superiority and pre-eminence confessedly on all hands accorded to the Bishop of Rome from the earliest times by other Bishops was a matter of convenience, or of ecclesiastical arrangement, and not of divine right as the successor of St. Peter.

In vain I laboured at my hopeless task. The Fathers seemed all to speak of the Apostolic See in terms which they never applied to any other See in Christendom. It was simply impossible for me to ascribe the dignity of this Church to the

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<sup>†</sup> The question proposed by Henry VIII. to Convocation and the Universities was, "Has the Bishop of Rome any greater jurisdiction conferred upon him by God in Holy Scripture in this realm of England than other foreign Bishop whatsoever?" Seeing that Scripture says nothing about "the Bishop of Rome" or "this realm of England," it is easy to understand how a determined tyrant obtained the answer he required to this artfully worded question.

ambition of its Pontiffs in the face of early ecclesiastical history. If it had been ambition, a meek and humble saint like St. Gregory would have been the first to have repudiated any authority over his brethren which his predecessors might have grasped at. And yet, notwithstanding, St. Gregory's well-known denunciation of any one who shall call himself Universal Bishop, I found him claiming and exercising power and jurisdiction over every Bishop in Christendom.

It is painful to find a clergyman of the high character of Mr. J. C. Chambers, of St. Mary's, Crown-street, lending himself to the perpetuation of popular misrepresentations of the Great St. Gregory, in a sermon recently printed. The slightest acquaintance with this great Father's Letters, shew that though out of humility he disclaims the *title* of "Universal Bishop," yet he acted invariably as the possessor of all that Pius IX. claims now. The following extracts will be sufficient to make this plain :—

"For as to what they say of the Church of Constantinople, who can doubt that it is subject to the Apostolic See? And this our most godly lord the Emperor, and our brother the Bishop of the same city constantly profess. At the same time, if that very Church or any other possesses anything good [*i.e.* in the way of ritual] I am ready to imitate them in the good thing and that my sons [*minores*] whom I forbid to act irregularly should do so too. For he is foolish who thinks that because he is the head [*primum*] he may scorn to learn good which he sees."\*

Again :—

"As to his [the Primate of Byzacium, in Africa] saying that he is subject to the Apostolic See; if any fault is found in Bishops I know not any Bishop who is not subject to that [See]. But when their fault does not require [the exercise of this authority] all, according to the rule of humility, are equal."†

St. Gregory's Letters to St. Augustine the Apostle of England, given in Bede's Ecclesiastical History‡, shew dis-

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\* St. Greg. M. lib. ix. Ind. 2, Epist. 12. † Ib. Epist. 59.

‡ Translated in Bohn's Library.

tinctly the powers of which this saintly Pope believed himself in possession ; and oblige us to regard his strong language to John of Constantinople as only an *argumentum ad hominem*. If he, the successor and representative of St. Peter, had never used this title though offered by a General Council, how arrogant and impious was it for another Bishop to assume it ! This was to me some years ago the obvious meaning of his words.

The 4th General Council of Chalcedon (A.D. 451) received and inserted in its Acts, *libelli* from a priest, two deacons, and a layman against Dioscorus Patriarch of Alexandria, each addressed :—“ *To the most holy Leo, beloved of God, the universal (οἰκουμένης) Archbishop, and Patriarch of great Rome ; and to the holy and universal (οἰκουμένης) Synod of Chalcedon, which is assembled by the will of God, and His holy commandment.*”

The same Council in pronouncing sentence upon Dioscorus, says :—

“Wherefore, the most holy and blessed Archbishop of great and old Rome, Leo, through us and through the present holy Synod, in union with the thrice blessed Apostle, worthy of all praise, blessed Peter, who is the Rock and Foundation of the Catholic Church, the basis of the orthodox Faith, hath deprived him of his episcopate, and also cast him forth from every priestly dignity, &c.”

This is one of the Councils the Church of England professes to acknowledge.

Dr. Pusey asserts that “St. Irenæus refers to Rome in no other way than he does to the Asiatic Churches, or any other which had had the Gospel preached to them by Apostles.”\* It may seem presumptuous in me to dispute a statement coming from such a quarter, but I would ask any candid reader to judge for himself whether St. Irenæus bears out that assertion. I place in parallel columns the passages referred to by Dr. Pusey :—

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\* “ *Rule of Faith*, p 41.”

## CHURCH OF ROME.

Hær. iii, 2.—But since it were very long in this space, to enumerate the successions of all Churches, we will by setting forth the traditions and the faith preached to all men, which that very great and ancient Church well-known to all handed down even to us by succession of Bishops, put to shame all those who in any way, either by self-pleasing, or vain glory, or blindness and evil mind, make unlawful conventicles. For with this Church on account of its more powerful principality it is necessary that all the Church should agree, that is, those who are believers everywhere, in which [Church] is preserved, by those who are everywhere, the tradition which is from the Apostles.

Chap. 3.—“When the blessed Apostles had founded and built up the Church they delivered the Episcopate to Linus for the administration of the Church. Of this Linus Paul makes mention in his epistle to Timothy. To him succeeds Anacletus; after him in the third place from the Apostles Clement obtains the episcopate, who also saw the Apostles themselves and conferred with them, and since he had as yet the famous preaching of the Apostles and their tradition before his eyes, he was not alone, for many who had been taught by the Apostles still survived. Under this Clement no small dissension having arisen among those brethren who were at Corinth, the Church which is at Rome wrote a most powerful letter to the Corinthians, calling them together to peace, repairing their faith, and declaring the tradition which they had so lately received from the Apostles.”

## CHURCHES OF ASIA.

Hær. iii, 4.—And Polycarp, too, not only having been instructed by the Apostles, and having lived continually with many who had seen Christ, and having also been appointed by Apostles Bishop in Asia in the Church at Smyrna, whom we too saw in our earliest youth (for he continued long, and when very aged, departed out of life, having borne in martyrdom a glorious and most illustrious testimony), uniformly taught these things, which he had learned from the Apostles, which also the Church hands down, which also alone are true. To these things all the Churches in Asia bear witness, and they who until now have succeeded Polycarp, who was a much more credible and surer witness of the truth than Valentinus and Marcion and the rest of the evil minded. For he it is, who, when he came to Rome in the time of Anicetus, converted many of those heretics whom we have mentioned above to the Church of God, declaring that he had received this one and only truth from the Apostles, which the Church also handed down. . . .

“There is also a most powerful epistle of Polycarp’s written to the Philippians, from which those who wish and who care for their salvation may learn both the character of his faith, and his preaching of the truth.

“Moreover the Church which is at Ephesus founded indeed by Paul, but with which John resided down to the time of Trajan, is a true witness of the tradition of the Apostles.”



Now, I ask, is Dr. Pusey's very positive assertion justified by St. Irenæus' words? If we go back a step further, and take the writings of St. Ignatius, the martyr Bishop of Antioch, the friend of Polycarp and the disciple of St. John, the same difference between Rome and all other Churches strikes one in the very titles of his epistles:—

#### TO THE CHURCH OF ROME.

"Ignatius, who is also called Theophorus, to the Church which hath obtained mercy in the majesty of the most high Father, and His only Son Jesus Christ; beloved and illuminated through the will of Him who willeth all things which are according to the love of Jesus Christ, our God; *which also presides in the place of the region of the Romans*; worthy of God, and of all honour, and blessing, and praise; *worthy to receive that which she longs for*; pure, and pre-eminent in charity; bearing the name of Christ, and of the Father; which I salute in the name of Jesus Christ the Son of the Father: to those who are united both in flesh and spirit to all His commands, and wholly filled with the grace of God and entirely cleansed from stain of any other doctrine, be all undefiled joy in Jesus Christ our God."

#### TO THE CHURCH OF EPHESUS.

"Ignatius, who is also called Theophorus, to the Church which is at Ephesus in Asia, worthy to be called happy, blessed through the greatness and fullness of God the Father, and predestinated before the world began to a glory incorruptible and that fadeth not away, being united and chosen through actual suffering according to the will of the Father and Jesus Christ our God, all happiness by Jesus Christ and His undefiled grace."

##### *To the Trallians.*

"Ignatius . . to the holy Church beloved of God the Father of Jesus Christ, which is at Tralles in Asia, &c."

##### *To the Philadelphians.*

"To the Church of God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ which is at Philadelphia in Asia, &c."

##### *To the Magnesians.*

"I salute the Church which is in Magnesia, near the Meander."

##### *To the Smyrneans.*

"To the Church of God the Father and the beloved Jesus Christ which is in Smyrna in Asia, &c."

It was true that I did not find an explicit statement of the prerogatives of the Roman Church, but there is nothing inconsistent with these prerogatives; and it would be as reasonable to say that the clergy of the Church of England do not believe in the existence of God because one never hears a

sermon proving it, as to infer from the comparative silence of the early Fathers that they did not acknowledge the Primacy of the Holy See. I could not conceal from myself that the evidence for the Bishop of Rome's superiority over all other bishops, appeared at least as strong as that for infant baptism. It is not a kind of evidence to *compel* belief, but when we go back in spirit and mingle with the crowd that follows the footsteps of Jesus of Nazareth, the gracious words, "Suffer the little children to come unto me and forbid them not," are quite sufficient to constrain Christian parents to bring their little ones to His representatives on earth now ; so the words of our Lord to Peter giving him the keys of the kingdom of heaven, promising that his faith should not fail, and committing the flock for which He died to his pastoral care, are quite sufficient to assure a believing heart that the successor of St. Peter is in possession now of all the powers that our Lord conferred on the Prince of the Apostles. That these extraordinary powers and privileges might be abused for purposes of worldly ambition was to be expected ; for Bishops and Popes are not exempt from the frailties of human nature, and the great Apostle himself once did that for which St. Paul asserts "he was to be blamed." Again and again did our divine Redeemer warn His Apostles against the pride which is the especial snare of high prerogatives, and history has shown the necessity of the warning ; but it would be a strange perversion a preacher's exhortation to an earthly prince that he should of humble himself in proportion to his exalted station, to infer from this that it was the sovereign's duty to abdicate his kingdom and his crown.

Of all the books that I ever read bearing on the Papal Supremacy none made so deep an impression upon me as Milman's History of Latin Christianity. While the sceptical tone in which it is written made me ashamed of a Church which could allow one of her great dignitaries to hold opinions so repugnant to the very principles of Christianity, I could

not but wonder at the powerful because unconscious testimony that very interesting work affords to the Divine character of the Papacy. I saw that, whenever the Popes adopted worldly policy, and formed strong political combinations, their schemes almost invariably came to naught ; but when in the helplessness of apparent weakness they fell back in faith and prayer on the divine promises given to St. Peter, fierce barbarians and rude conquerors bowed down before their words and acknowledged an authority which stood between them and the gratification of their strongest and most untamed passions. I asked myself, could God thus again and again give His sanction to a lie ? And where except in the words of our Lord to St. Peter is to be found the origin of this mysterious power ?

The more attentively and prayerfully I studied Holy Scripture upon this point the more impossible did the Protestant explanation of our Lord's words to St. Peter become. Dr. Moberly, in his "*Sayings of the Forty Days*," page 162, exactly expresses my own conclusion : "When we look into the Gospels and examine the passages in anticipation of the Church and its constitution in these respects, it is impossible to deny that there are several which seem to portend some kind of eminency or superiority of St. Peter above the other Apostles." Dr. M. thinks that the Acts and the Epistles modify this conclusion, but it seemed to me natural to expect that apostolic humility would conceal the greatness of its authority except where it was absolutely necessary to put it forth. St. Paul implies this in the words "though I should boast somewhat more of our authority which the Lord hath given me for edification, and not for your destruction, I should not be ashamed."\* And it is in perfect accordance with this apostolic humility that St. Gregory the Great sets forth St. Peter's conduct as an example to all in authority : "Although Peter had received power over the kingdom of heaven, so that

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\* ii. Cor. x. 8.

whatsoever he bound or loosed on earth were bound or loosed in heaven ; he walked on the sea, his shadow healed the sick, he slew sinners with a word, he raised the dead with a prayer ; and because he had entered in to the Gentile Cornelius at the admonition of the Spirit, a question was raised against him by the faithful as to why he had entered in to the Gentiles and eaten with them, and why he had received them to baptism. And yet this same first of the Apostles filled with such grace of gifts, endowed with such power of miracles, answered the complaint of the faithful not by the exercise of power but by giving his reasons, and expounded the matter in order how a certain vessel, &c. . . . For if when he was blamed by the faithful he had regarded the power which he had received in the holy Church, he might have answered that the sheep which had been committed to him should not venture to find fault with their own pastor. But if on the complaint of the faithful he had said anything of his own power, he would not have been then the teacher of meekness. He soothed them therefore with a humble explanation, and on the matter complained of he even produced witnesses, saying, 'There came with me these six brethren which are here.' If, therefore, the Pastor of the Church, the Prince of the Apostles, the special worker of signs and wonders, did not disdain in the case of himself being found fault with humbly to give his reasons, how much more ought we sinners, when we are found fault with for any thing, humbly to soothe our reprovers with a lowly explanation." †

This reasonable explanation appeared to account for all the conduct of the early Popes. They never denied any single prerogative which is possessed by the Holy Father now. They simply did not think it necessary to put forth those powers which the wants of the Church in later ages required, and which are all contained in the commission of St. Peter.

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† St. Greg. Magn. Epist. xlv., Ad Theoctistam.

My entire failure thus to convict the Church of Rome of positive error on the matter of the Supremacy made me fear that, upon other points on which I had been taught to regard her as wrong, I might also be mistaken. The painful fact that the Church of England in Convocation and through the Universities had as a body refused to sanction any of Queen Elizabeth's Reforming measures, and that it was only when all the then existing bishops were deprived of their sees, that the Queen had been able to bring about a change in religion by Acts of Parliament and Royal Proclamations, after which the new hierarchy were intruded into the vacant sees in defiance of all ecclesiastical tradition,—this began to break in upon me as an entire cutting away of the ground on which the Church of England rested, and drove me to ask the desperate question whether after all Calvinism might not be true. Still I saw men wiser and better than myself in every way seemingly satisfied with their position, and I resolved to leave no stone unturned to obtain their calm contentment with the Church of my youth and of which I was a minister. Often for months together I never opened a book in which the Roman Catholic question was discussed or hinted at. I hoped prayer and study of scripture, with the intensely engrossing work of attending to the souls of others would in time lead me to some satisfactory solution of the question. I thought of the desolation and perplexity into which so many earnest and true hearted persons who had trusted me fully would be plunged were I even to hint that I had any doubts; and I was even presumptuous enough to say that I would not purchase my own salvation at the risk of unsettling their faith.

I am quite prepared for the charge of dishonesty. It may be said that I ought not to have gone on ministering in the Church of England when I had serious doubts of her position. But I must ask you, my friends, to remember that these doubts were never wilfully indulged, they were the greatest pain and anguish to me; and I thought if any person were

able to find truth and peace in the Church of England, I might find it if I waited patiently, and perhaps these difficulties were only the just chastisement for my sins, or the destined means for preparing me for more extended usefulness to others. It appeared to me that what satisfied men like Dr. Pusey and Mr. Keble ought to satisfy me, and that it was presumptuous in me to enter upon so vast a subject with such insufficient preparation both of heart and intellect.

The necessity of arming those who looked to me for advice against the insidious proselyting efforts of the Plymouth Brethren, the most logically consistent and yet the most destructive of all Protestant sects, obliged me again to give my attention to controversy. I mastered the whole of the Plymouth Brethren system in all its details, studied over again very carefully the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles, and traced the history of the Church from the day of Pentecost with special reference to the plausible reasonings of this self-satisfied little sect which professes to be the true centre of Christian unity. The Plymouth Brethren, however, impressed one truth upon my mind for which I thank them most sincerely. They made me discern more clearly than I had done before that all those who believe in our Lord Jesus Christ can only be divided one from another by that which is merely of man, and hence the Church must have a divine authority for all which she requires as conditions of communion. The necessary consequence of this is that all must unite in that one only Church which claims to be a divine teacher now in this nineteenth century, or else that every man must pare down his own notions of the truth to the smallest possible amount that can be considered necessary.

It is a great mercy that men do not generally follow out their theories to their logical consequences, but that the conclusions of our reason are modified by our instincts and habits. This saves us from hastily acting upon false principles, although

it also makes us slow to act upon true ones. The only immediate effect of my investigations at this time was the Course of Lectures on Church History which were afterwards published. I am surprised to see how little there is in those Lectures which I should alter if I had to write them now. As far as they go, though they do not contain the full truth, yet the germ of the whole is there, and there is not a sentence which really tells against the truth as I see it now in the light of the Church. The result at the time was to call off my attention from the claims of Rome, but I was unconsciously collecting facts which were of the greatest use to me afterwards.

When, after spending a winter abroad on account of my health, I entered upon my duties at Torquay, my mind was considerably more free from perplexity than it had been for some time. Relaxation from work and from the perpetual recurrence of religious questions, enabled me to look at things more cheerfully. I was persuaded that the Church of Rome practises and teaches certain things now which were not taught or practised in the early Church. This is the ground upon which most High Churchmen are standing, and it rests for its sole support on the denial of any development of doctrine since the days of the Apostles. *Quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus*: "That which hath been believed everywhere, always, and of all men." This was the golden rule which I repeated to myself and to others. I need not say anything of my life or teaching during the two years and a half I spent in a place which is full of sweet and tender recollections to me. If kindness, a devout and attentive people, true and loving hearts, earnestly desiring to know and to do the will of God, could bind me; if the success of my ministrations could encourage me, and the wants of those whom sickness or sorrow had prepared to receive the seed of the divine word could interest me—and I know nothing that could bind, encourage, and interest me more—all this I had

at Torquay. My public teaching with its faults and inconsistencies must answer for itself. With the exception of a few presumptuous sentences against the Holy Roman Church of the true character of which I was really ignorant as most other Anglicans are, I am surprised to think how very little there was in my public preaching that I would wish unsaid. I do not think either Evangelicals or Dissenters will accuse me of not having "preached the Gospel," and my doctrinal statements were nothing more than the language of the Fathers modernised. To the best of my ability I acted upon the rule sanctioned by the Convocation of 1571 and confirmed by the authority of Queen Elizabeth :—

"Let preachers above all things be careful that they never teach aught in a sermon to be religiously held and believed by the people, except that which is agreeable to the doctrine of the Old or New Testaments ; and which the Catholic Fathers, and ancient Bishops have collected from that very doctrine."

And yet I could not do this fully. I found continually that the Fathers interpreted Holy Scripture in a way which was quite inconsistent with the Articles of the Church of England. For instance, the 31st Article declares, "The sacrifices of Masses, in the which it was commonly said that the Priest did offer Christ for the quick and the dead, to have remission of pain or guilt, were blasphemous fables, and dangerous deceits." St. Cyril, of Jerusalem, who delivered his Catechetical Lectures about A.D. 347, soon after the Council of Nice, explains the Liturgy to his Catchumens in a way that is perfectly applicable to the Roman Mass, but utterly inconsistent with the Anglican Communion Service or the Article quoted above. He says :—\*

"Then we call upon the merciful God to send forth His Holy Spirit upon the gifts lying before Him; that He may make the bread the body

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\* Lect. XXIII. 7—10. Oxf. Trans.



of Christ, and the wine the blood of Christ; for whatsoever the Holy Ghost has touched is sanctified and changed.

"8. Then after the spiritual sacrifice is perfected, the unbloody service upon that Sacrifice of Propitiation, we entreat God for the common peace of the Church, for the tranquillity of the world; for kings, for soldiers and allies, for the sick, for the afflicted, and in a word, for all who stand in need of succour we all supplicate and offer this sacrifice.

"9. Then we commemorate also those who have fallen asleep before us; first, Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles, Martyrs, that at their prayers and intervention God would receive our petition. Afterwards also on behalf of the holy Fathers and Bishops who have fallen asleep before us, and in a word of all who in past years have fallen asleep among us, believing that it will be a very great advantage to the souls, for whom the supplication is put up, while that holy and most awful sacrifice is presented.

"10. And I wish to persuade you by an illustration. For I know that many say, what is a soul profited which departs from this world either with sins or without sins, if it be commemorated in the prayers? Now surely if, when a king had banished certain who had given him offence, their connections should weave a crown and offer it to him on behalf of those under his vengeance, would he not grant a respite to their punishments? In the same way we, when we offer to Him our supplications for those who have fallen asleep, though they be sinners, weave no crown, but offer up Christ, sacrificed for our sins, propitiating our merciful God both for them and for ourselves."

As I was therefore unable to preach what the Fathers taught in all its fullness, I carefully poured the living waters that flowed through them into the broken cisterns of Anglican formularies, and what could not be supported by the Prayer Book and the Articles fell to the ground. Not even in my own mind did I allow myself to believe in any truth unsanctioned by the Church of England, although I often had serious misgivings as to the safety of rejecting Patristic teaching out of deference to a Church which disclaimed its own infallibility.

Perhaps the greatest difficulty I had was to teach little children what they meant when they said, "*I believe in the Holy Catholic Church.*" I never met with a High Churchman yet who could give a simple practical explanation of this Article of our Faith which a child could understand. St. Cyril gives a very plain reason for it: "The faith has delivered to thee by way of security the Article 'And in one Holy

Catholic Church,' that thou mayest avoid their wretched meetings, and ever abide with the Holy Church Catholic in which thou wast regenerated. And if ever thou are sojourning in any city, inquire not simply where the Lord's house is (for the sects of the profane also make an attempt to call their own dens, houses of the Lord,) nor merely which the Church is, but where the Catholic Church is. For this is the peculiar name of this holy body, the Mother of us all, which is the Spouse of our Lord Jesus Christ, the only Begotten Son of God, &c." \*

Yes! there is a power which strikes not one chord but many, I may say all the true chords of sympathy in the heart at the very mention of the name "CATHOLIC." It calls up in our memory the early confessors and martyrs before their persecutors proclaiming boldly, "Christian is my name: Catholic is my surname." But there is only one body of Christians in the world who can use it without a sense of unreality. Protestants properly so called hate it while they fear it; Anglicans have in vain tried to combine it with their own insulated position, but the term Anglo-Catholic has already well nigh died out; the Eastern Churches with the unerring instinct of schism have substituted for it either the name of their respective sects, or the self-exalting title of 'Orthodox.' It remains now as in the days of St. Cyril and St. Augustine, the peculiar title of one people who are recognized by it in every quarter of the globe. St. Augustine's reasons for remaining in the Catholic Church are those which bind her children now. "The agreement of peoples and nations keeps me there; her authority founded by miracles, nourished by hope, increased by love, strengthened by antiquity keeps me there; her succession of priests, from the very See of Peter the Apostle to whom the Lord after his resurrection committed His sheep to be fed, down to the

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\* St. Cyril, *Jerus., Cat. Lect. xviii. 26. Oxf. Trans.*

present episcopate keeps me there; lastly, the very name of *Catholic*, which not without a cause among so many heresies that Church alone possesses, so that although all heretics wish themselves to be called Catholics, yet if any traveller were to ask where the congregation meets at the Catholic Church, none of the heretics would dare to shew him either his own Church or house.”\*

These and many other passages from the Fathers pressed upon my conscience; but owing to my very limited knowledge of their writings, I thought that, perhaps, they might be explained, as in fact they are explained away by learned Anglican divines.

Thus I went on learning and teaching Truth as best I could, and striving to promote holiness of life and unity among Christians. My tranquillity was disturbed somewhat by the “*Essays and Reviews*,” and Bishop Colenso’s works; I was startled to see how readily educated and professional men adopted the infidelity so scantily veiled in these writings; and though it was encouraging to read the learned replies that were given to their objections, yet the apparent inability of the Church of England to preserve the faith and to meet new heresies opened up old questionings which I had trusted would not again disturb me. Nevertheless, I caught eagerly at every indication of life in the Church of England, both at home and abroad, and I clung to the hope that a body which contained so many good and devoted men, and in which so remarkable a revival of the old Catholic doctrine was spreading, not only in towns and among intellectual people, but in remote villages and among persons of all classes throughout the length and breadth of England and her colonies—that such a body must have something divine in its constitution. Circumstances soon forced me to put this vague hope to a practical test.

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S. Augustine. *Contr. Epist. Man*, lib. 1., c. 5.

At the beginning of this present year of grace, 1863, the conversion of a clergyman of greater age and standing than the generality of Catholic converts, obliged me again to examine my own position. On former occasions the "Roman question" had presented itself to me as a matter for my own personal consideration, but had appeared rather to take me away from my own immediate duties. This time it presented itself in the very path of my duties. I had to answer the difficulties of others, the anxious inquiries of true and devout souls who simply wished to know the will of God and to do it. They had a right to expect a clear and definite answer from me, "for the priest's lips should keep knowledge and they should seek the law at his mouth." If I could have said "I am infallibly certain that the Church of England is the only true Church, and I, as the representative of Christ bid you in His name regard your misgivings as the inspirations of an evil spirit, and put them away," they might have obeyed me. But neither I nor any other Anglican clergyman could use this language without the sin of presumption. Positiveness and infallibility are totally different things; and as every misgiving of others awakened an echo in my own heart, I trembled at the responsibility I was incurring by continuing to speak and act as if I had not a single doubt. Like the false prophets of Israel "I made others to hope that I would confirm the word;" and I was incurring the woe pronounced upon those "who entered not in themselves and them that were entering in they hindered." It was in vain for me to tell people not to trust in me or in any man. I gave reasons out of scripture and the Fathers that had seemed to satisfy me, but I soon found that persons who could not understand, or if they could, were unable to feel satisfied by my reasons, yet found a certain comfort in thinking that I was satisfied by them. Tertullian's warning sounded significantly to me and to them: "Thou who art seeking and art looking to those who are themselves also seeking, thyself in doubt being led by

those who are in doubt, thyself unassured by those who are unassured, thyself blind by those who are blind, must needs be led into the ditch." \*

The only resource I had was to cast my increasingly intolerable burthen of responsibility upon Him who has said "Come unto me and I will give you rest;" I found some degree of power in exhorting others to trust themselves with confidence to the sacred Heart of Jesus Christ, which is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, and which is still touched with a feeling for our infirmities. But I felt that I had resisted His call and might be resisting it still, though for the sake of others I prayed for light with the confidence that some way would open for me to go more fully into the important question than I had hitherto done. I was convinced I ought to bring matters to a point, and yet dreaded taking the responsibility of declaring my doubts and resigning my curacy. For if I were to do so, I feared the shock to the faith of others would be almost as great as if I had left the Church of England; and even if I eventually saw good reasons for remaining in that Church, I should not be able to efface the harm that the confession of my having had doubts would certainly cause. I could not at that time be sure that my doubts were not temptations; and as long as I continued to minister I felt bound to treat them as such: this I did up to the very day of my leaving Torquay.

Circumstances made it my duty to explain to my Incumbent the state of mind in which I was. The entire confidence and generous kindness with which he had always treated me required openness on my part. I shall ever be grateful for the kind consideration he showed for me in the trying position in which my avowal placed him. After due deliberation and the advice of valued friends he came to the conclusion that his duty to his congregation and to the Church of England made him

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\* Tertul. de Præscr. hæc.

deem it best for us both, that I should retire quietly from Torquay and seek advice upon the questions which troubled me; and if my difficulties were removed I could return; if not, it was better that I should leave at once, lest I might communicate my misgivings to others. It is due to the Incumbent of St. John's that this should be known, for I should be extremely sorry that he should on my account be suspected of wilfully harbouring one who was unfaithful to the Church of England.

It was an intense relief to me, in spite of the sorrow at leaving so many dear friends, to feel really free to enter upon the great question before me. Yet each step had been so plain,—I had had nothing to do but simply speak the truth and walk straight on without a single misgiving as to the right of what I had done,—that all excitement or fears about the result were taken away. And gradually as I approached the subjects which I was about to examine my way became more and more distinct. I had the advantage of the advice of the most pious, devoted, and learned men that the Church of England possesses; and they spared no pains to remove my doubts.

I. The first subject to which I directed my attention was that of *Infallibility*, and whether the Church of Rome could be trusted when she had confessedly defined as Articles of Faith dogmas which were not Articles of Faith in earlier ages. The doctrine of the Immaculate Conception was the most obvious example. I had never been at all offended at the doctrine itself. I never could be certain that it was not true; indeed when one considered the Immaculate Nativity of St. John the Baptist, it was probable to say the least that divine grace had sanctified Mary the destined Mother of God from the first moment of her conception.\* But my difficulty was

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\* The testimony of Holy Scripture and of the Fathers is brought together in Bishop Ullathorne's "*Immaculate Conception*," Richardson, London, in a way which it seems impossible to gainsay.

at this becoming an Article of Faith after the lapse of 1800 years. It seemed contrary to the rule of St. Vincent, of Lerins, which is the watchword of all High Churchmen : *Quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus*. I determined to fortify myself by reading again St. Vincent's Treatise. And here the very ground on which I was standing gave way beneath my feet. In chapter XXIII. of the *Commonitorium* I came upon these words :—

“ But peradventure some will say, shall we then have no advancement of religion in the Church of Christ ? Surely let us have the greatest that may be . . . but yet in such sort that it may be truly an increase of faith and not a change ; since this is the Nature of an increase, that in themselves severally things grow greater ; but of a change, that something be turned, from one thing which it was, to another thing which it was not. Fitting it is therefore that the understanding, knowledge, and wisdom, as well of every man in particular, as of all in common ; as well of one alone as of the whole Church in general, should by the advance of ages abundantly increase and go forward, but yet for all that, only in its own kind and nature ; that is in the same doctrine, in the same sense, in the same judgment. In this case let the religion of our souls imitate the nature of our bodies, which, although with process of time they develope and unfold their proportions, yet they remain the same that they were. There is great difference betwixt the flower of youth, and the ripeness of age, yet the self-same men become old which before were young ; so that although the state and condition of one and the self-same man be altered, yet one and the self-same nature, one and the self-same person, doth still remain. The limbs of infants be small, of young men great, yet not divers, but the same. So many joints as young children have, so many have they when they be men ; and if any parts there be, which with increase of more mature years spring forth, those before were in man virtually planted in manner as the seed, so that no new thing do come forth in old men, which before had not lain hid in them being children.” (Oxf. Trans.)

This passage expresses precisely the development contended for by modern Catholic divines, and every single doctrine of the Holy Roman Church will thus be found to be included in St. Vincent's rule, when that rule is understood as he himself intended that it should be understood. Some learned Anglicans to whom I pointed out this passage refused to accept Chapter XXIII., and said it was St. Vincent's private opinion ; and I fear this is the way in which even High Churchmen treat the Fathers ; they accept what they like and reject what they dis-

like, each according to his own judgment. And thus one portion of St. Vincent's Treatise is lauded to the skies as an infallible rule, while another portion which explains the sense in which it is to be understood is ignored and condemned. It was, however, impossible for me to imagine that St. Vincent could contradict himself in the same short treatise, and my objections to development fell to the ground, and at the same time my belief in the present Infallibility of the Church became much more clear.

In my Lectures on Church History I had unconsciously stated the true doctrine on this point. I had said (p. 149):— "The creed of the Church was more ancient than any of the writings of the New Testament. Before one single word of the Epistles or Gospels had been written the faith was taught and handed down by a living tradition whole and undefiled. The sacred writings only put upon record the faith once delivered to the saints, and unfolded more fully the wisdom and knowledge of that truth which was and is in Jesus. And therefore, as the constitution of the Church was unchanged by the publication of the sacred writings, so it remained unchanged when plenary inspiration ceased, and the last Apostle passed within the veil. . . . The Holy Ghost had not departed because Peter, Paul, and John were no longer in the world; the words of Jesus had no limit but the end of the Christian dispensation: 'Lo I am with you all days, even unto the end of the world.'"

But where were these teachers who spoke with an infallible voice? St. Irenæus and Tertullian told me I should find them in the Roman Church. St. Augustine told me "for inquirers it is enough that there is one Catholic Church to which various heresies apply different names, while they themselves as they cannot deny, are called each by their own names. And hence it is given to impartial judgments to understand to whom the



name of Catholic, to which all aspire, ought to be assigned." \*  
 . . . . "Since then we see [she has] such assistance from God, such advancement, and such fruit, shall we hesitate about hiding ourselves in the bosom of that Church, which (on the confession of the human race) has, by the succession of Bishops from the Apostolic See, obtained the highest degree of authority." †

2. Many doctrines of the Catholic Church which are difficulties to some were not any real difficulty to me. My experience of death beds compelled me to believe in some kind of Purgatory: and most people who think at all upon the subject have come to the same conclusion. It is to me one of the most consoling doctrines of the Church, whether one thinks of one's departed friends, or of one's own unfitness for the sudden transition to the unveiled presence of God.

The Church from the beginning had taught me to pray for the dead. Human nature itself revolts against the dark Protestant ignoring of the practice of the universal Church.

St. Augustine had taught me the essential difference between the *Cultus* of the saints, and the *Latria* which is paid to God alone. ‡ I never thought it right myself while a member of the Church of England to invoke the saints, or even to say the *Ave Maria*; but when I saw a saint like St. Bernard unable to find words sufficiently exalted to express his devotion to the Holy Mother of God, I felt certain that such devotion could not be really dishonouring or displeasing to our Lord. The fact is, no Catholic, however ignorant, makes the mistake. A priest assured me that out of 2,500 confessions he had never met with a single instance even of a child mistaking the honour paid to the most exalted of created beings for the honour due to God alone. Catholics who use these devotions to the saints must surely know better what

\* St. Aug. De util. cred., c. 9.

† Ib. c. 35. See the whole Tract.

‡ Contr. Faust. lib. xx. c. 21.

they mean and what they do not mean by them than Protestants who do not use them at all. It would be strange if a Luther were more clear-sighted than a St. Bernard in what touched the honour of God. It is no dishonour to the Head that the joints and bands should each have their appointed work to fulfil in that wondrous body which "fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."<sup>\*</sup>

The principle of *Indulgences* seemed to me contained in St. Paul's remission of the excommunicated Corinthian's term of penance<sup>†</sup>, and in the indulgences granted by confessors and martyrs in the times of St. Cyprian.

3. *Communion in one kind*, which was one of my greatest stumbling-blocks, ceased to be so when I had learned that it is our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, in His own Person that we receive in the blessed Sacrament; and as His Body and Blood are living and cannot any more be divided, it is impossible to receive more by receiving under both kinds, or less by receiving only under one. But the Holy Eucharist would not shew forth the Death of Christ, or be a true Sacrifice, unless the Body and Blood were represented as in the state of separation that they were when He died upon the Cross; and thus the command of our Lord is obeyed when all celebrating priests drink of that Chalice.

4. This brings me to the point from which I started, and which is the great and essential difference between the Catholic Religion and Protestantism of every shade, the glorious doctrine and blessed fact of the Real Presence of Jesus on the altars of the Church; the literal fulfilment of the precious promise: "I will not leave you orphans: I will come to you.

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<sup>\*</sup> Eph. iv. 16.

<sup>†</sup> 2 Cor. ii. 6.

Yet a little while and the world seeth Me no more : but ye see Me : because I live ye shall live also."

If any one wishes to know what the Fathers, from the death of St. John the Evangelist to the Fourth General Council, believed and taught concerning the Holy Eucharist, he cannot do better than read the extracts from their works on this great mystery translated by Dr. Pusey, in his "Real Presence from the Fathers." The calm testimony of saints long since entered into their rest is far more convincing to a candid mind than the arguments of an eager controversialist, and the more we become imbued with the spirit of antiquity the better able are we to see our way through the contradictions of the present day.

Such at any rate was my own view ; and yet when I acted upon it, and then full of the sentiments of the ancient writers turned to the Articles and Communion Service of the Church of England I was compelled to acknowledge that they spoke a totally different language. I have already given an instance in the case of the Eucharistic Sacrifice, and I found it the same with the Real Presence. Dr. Pusey has written a work expressly to shew that this is not so, but that the Church of England's formularies rightly understood do express the ancient faith. I read that work with great care, and the only thing it appeared to me to prove was that those formularies were so constructed as not to exclude persons from honestly holding a certain view of the Real Presence, provided that they repudiated *Transubstantiation*. In order to do this the learned author is obliged to represent *Transubstantiation* as meaning something which no Roman Catholic would admit that it does mean, and also that the words in the Prayer Book mean that which no Protestant would allow that they were intended to mean. The result is, as might be expected, that only a very few persons are able to accept Dr. Pusey's position.

There are probably not three Bishops in Christendom who would agree with him.

The simple fact is that wherever the word *Transubstantiation*\* is rejected, the ancient faith in the Real Presence is lost. No one will pretend that the great body of Anglican clergy or laity believe in it, and yet it is pretended that this body; which of all Christian communities claiming to possess Apostolical Succession *alone* denies Transubstantiation, is the one witness in the world for the true doctrine of the Real Presence. All I can say is, that I never was able to find out what the Church of England meant me to believe and teach upon this most vital truth; and I had but little difficulty in receiving the Roman Catholic definition, when I knew that the Eastern Churches had declared that "the word *Transubstantiation* is not to be taken to define the manner in which the bread and wine are changed into the Body and Blood of the Lord," [which I suppose means the manner of the presence] "for this none can understand but God; but only thus much is signified, that the bread truly, really, and substantially becomes the very true Body of the Lord, and the wine the very Blood of the Lord. In like manner St. John Damascene, treating of the Holy and Immaculate Mysteries of the Lord, writes thus:—"It is truly that Body united with Godhead which had its origin from the Holy Virgin; not as though that Body which ascended came down from heaven, but because the bread and wine themselves are changed into the Body and Blood of God. But if thou seekest after the manner how this is, let it suffice thee to be told, that it is by the Holy Ghost; in like manner, as by the same Holy Ghost, the Lord formed flesh to Himself, and in Himself, from the Mother of God; nor know I aught more than this, that the word of God is true, powerful, and almighty, but its manner of operation unsearchable." (Lib. 4., cap. XIII. 7.) †

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\* See the correspondence for the last few months in the *Church Review* upon this very point.

† Blackmore's *Doctrine of Russian Church*, p. 92.

I never could discover a time when the Reformed Church of England held the doctrine of the Real Presence. There was a period when all her clergy held baptismal regeneration, but belief in the Real Presence has always been confined to a few individuals. To the end of the reign of Henry VIII. the Six Bloody Articles threatened death to any one who denied Transubstantiation, and Archbishop Cranmer carried out the laws. † But when those articles were repealed on the accession of Edward VI., and Convocation was refused any share in Parliamentary discussions on religion, a gradual change took place in the opinions of the reforming party. On December 14th, 1548, Cranmer astonished every one by denying the Real Presence altogether in the House of Lords,—as Traheron expressed it,\* it was “all over with the Lutherans.” And yet the Prayer Book of 1549 which Cranmer had the chief hand in compiling is regarded by High Churchmen as a perfect palladium of the true doctrine. It was not indeed sufficiently reformed to please Cranmer and Ridley, who procured in 1552 the establishment by Parliament, of a Prayer Book which all High Churchmen admit to be positively heretical. Ridley had shown his own disbelief in the Holy Sacrifice by demolishing the altars in St. Paul’s Cathedral and in other London churches in 1550. †

I had never studied very accurately the works of the Reformers (with the exception of Jewell) until a few months ago ; so that I did not know until quite lately how entirely they differ from the teaching of the Early Church on the most fundamental principles of Christianity, and especially on the doctrine of the Holy Eucharist. As for Cranmer himself, Bishop Burnet had taught me more than ten years ago that he was not to be trusted on any doctrinal point. His own

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\* Letters to Bullinger.

† That there may be no doubt of his meaning in doing this, his reasons are given in his works printed by the Parker Society, p. 391.

answers to questions proposed by himself shew this to every one who reads them.

In answer to the question, "Whether the Apostles, lacking a higher power, as in not having a Christian King among them, made Bishops by that necessity or by Authority given by God?" The first Protestant Archbishop of Canterbury "thinks it was by that necessity, for he says that Christian princes appoint spiritual as well as civil officers under them. In the admission of many of these officers, be divers comely ceremonies and solemnities used, which be not of necessity . . . . . for if such offices were committed without such solemnity they were nevertheless truly committed: and there is no more promise of God, that grace is given in the committing of the ecclesiastical office than it is in the civil."\* And again, "A Bishop may make a Priest by the scripture, and so may any Princes or Governors also, and that by the authority of God committed to them, and the people also by their election."† And in answer to "Whether in the New Testament be required any consecration of a Bishop or Priest, or only appointing to the office be sufficient?" He says, "Election or appointing thereto is sufficient."‡

There is a simplicity about these heretical statements which supersedes the necessity of any comment; and this is the compiler of the Book of Common Prayer! What wonder that in his examination before a committee of Convocation he should flatly deny the doctrine deduced by St. Hilary from the words, "As the living Father hath sent Me and I live by the Father, so he that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me."

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\* Burnet's Collection, Book 2., No. XXI., quest 9.    † Ib., quest 11.

‡ Ib. quest. 12. It is worthy of remark that Barlow, of St. Davids, the consecrator of Archbishop Parker agreed with Cranmer in these and other similar heretical statements. See his words printed by Burnet.

I give Burnet's condensation of the Disputation printed at length by Foxe :—

#### ST. HILARY.

"Of the truth of the flesh and blood there is no room left for doubt. For now according both to the declaration of the Lord Himself and our faith, it is truly flesh and truly blood. And these, received and drunk into us, cause that both we are in Christ and Christ is in us. . . . Since He in whom we abide, abideth in the Father; and abiding in the Father, He abideth in us, and thus we advance to the unity of the Father; in that in Him who is in the Father by way of nature, according to His [Eternal] nativity, we also are by way of nature, since, He Himself by way of nature abideth in us."\*

#### CRAMNER.

"The similitude did not impart an equality, but a likeness of some sort. Christ is essentially united to His Father, but believers are united to Him by grace and that in baptism as well as in the Eucharist."†

#### RIDLEY,

"If you take *really* for *vere*, for spiritually, by grace and efficacy, then it is true that the natural body and blood of Christ is in the Sacrament *vere et realiter*, indeed and really; but if you take these terms so grossly, that you would conclude thereby a natural body having motion to be contained under the forms of bread and wine *vere et realiter*, then really is not the body and blood of Christ in the Sacrament, no more than the Holy Ghost is in the element of water in our baptism."‡

I cannot conceive how, in the face of the plainest statements of these two chief Anglican Reformers, High Churchmen can quote their works as agreeing with the ancient Fathers. It is really just as dishonest as Mr. Isaac Taylor§ has shown the authors of the Homilies to be in their extracts from the Fathers, using their words to support that which their whole lives and writings prove that they would never have sanctioned.

But admitting that the Real Presence and the Eucharistic Sacrifice were denied by the Reformers in the time of Edward VI., may it not be hoped from certain changes Queen

\* De Trin. viii., 14, 15, † Burnet's Reformation, Part II., Bk. 2, p. 507.

‡ Ridley's Works, p. 273, Parker Society.

§ Ancient Christianity. I would recommend all High Churchmen to read this book.

Elizabeth's Prayer Book, in 1562, that the ancient doctrines of the presence and the sacrifice were restored? Let us examine the facts. Queen Elizabeth was proclaimed Nov. 16th, 1558. On Dec. 27th, the Queen issued an Order in Council forbidding priests to elevate the Host. "Oglethorp, Bishop of Carlisle, standing ready to say Mass before the Queen, she commanded him not to elevate the consecrated Host to prevent the idolatry that the people were then wont to commit; but to omit the ceremony, because she liked it not."\* In vain both Houses of Convocation unanimously put forth a declaration stating, among other things: "that in the Sacrament of the Altar by virtue of the words of Christ duly spoken by the priest, is present *realiter* under the kinds of bread and wine, the natural Body of Christ, conceived of the Virgin Mary, and also His natural Blood." The two Universities joined them in petitioning the House of Lords early in 1552 that no change in this or other doctrines might be forced upon the people.† According to Froude three-fourths of the people of England were Catholic. But Elizabeth had the extraordinary energy which great and unscrupulous characters often possess, and by means of the political complications in which all parties were involved, she procured the passing of an Act of Uniformity by which the Prayer Book of 1552 was restored "with an alteration of certain lessons to be used on every Sunday in the year, and the form of the Litany altered and corrected, and two sentences only added in the delivery of the Sacrament to the communicants, and none other or otherwise."‡ Before the passing of this bill *by a majority of three* on May 1st, by an ingenious stroke of policy, out of 14 Bishops, 5 had been by imprisonment or otherwise, prevented from attending the House of Lords, although Strype has preserved a powerful speech against its first introduction made by Abbot Feckenham;

\* Strype's Annals, vol. i. p. 73. And yet Dr. Pusey endeavours to show that this prohibition had nothing to do with "the adoration of Christ in the Sacrament."  
—Real Presence, page 314, 315.

† Cellier's Eccles. Hist. Part II. Book 6.

‡ 1 Edw., c. 2.



and also one by Scott, Bishop of Chester, who says that according to the new Liturgy no one could ever be certain that there is a valid Eucharist, because the priest reads the Consecration Prayer without any taking of the Paten and Chalice into his hands, or doing as Christ commanded to be done in remembrance of Him.\* It is not generally known that this defect remained unaltered from 1552 to 1662.

And yet we are told that the Church of England now reformed herself and put away the errors of Rome! It was the Queen and Parliament that did the whole work long before Parker was made Archbishop of Canterbury. On May 18th, the 14 Bishops, all who were then on the bench, were deprived for declining the Oath of Supremacy. Kitchen, of Llandaff, alone was afterwards induced to take the Oath, and suffered to retain his See. From their prisons, however, they warned their flocks not to communicate with those who read the new Liturgy, which was ordered to be read on St. John Baptist's day, but which "the popish priests, that is, the majority of them utterly refused."† Cox writes to Wolfgang Weidner, on May 20th, 1559: "We are thundering forth in our pulpits, and especially before our Queen Elizabeth, that the Roman Pontiff is truly Anti-christ, and that traditions are for the most part mere blasphemies. At length many of the nobility and vast numbers of the people began by degrees to return to their senses; but of the clergy none at all. For the whole body remain unmoved, standing as stiff as a rock. '*Tanquam dura silex, aut stet Marpesia cautes*,' as the poet sings."‡

It may be alleged that these violent proceedings were the work of the State and not of the Church. This is true if it be fairly understood. The real Church of England in its episcopate was in prison, a new body of clergy were brought

\* See Hansard's Parliamentary History, vol. 1. Strype's Appendix; or Collier Part 2. Book 6.

† Strype's Annals, c. xi. Jewel writes that "scarcely two at Oxford were of their [Protestant] judgment."

‡ Zurich Letters, xi. Park. Soc.

in, partly from abroad, and partly formed out of a few priests who were willing to apostatise from the old faith, and these did the Queen's will and pleasure, until she procured the Consecration of Dr. Parker. Verily the body thus formed was *not* the Church of England, and yet it is the sole parent of that great and respectable body now generally known by the name of the "Church of England;" and which, if the majority of every nation may express its religious convictions as it chooses, may in a real sense be called the Church of England.

The present Church of England then opened her first Convocation on January 12th, 1562, when Nowell, the Protestant Dean of St. Paul's, the author of the present Catechism, preached on the advisability of putting to death as soon as possible the Catholic Bishops in the Tower. This Convocation approved of Nowell's long Catechism and gave it its Synodical sanction. That Catechism denied distinctly both the Real Presence and the Eucharistic Sacrifice. It is true that Parker, Guest, and especially Cheney, Bishop of Gloucester, had more or less strong leanings towards Lutheranism. The Queen was what would now be called "a better Churchwoman" than any of her Bishops. It is ludicrous to read their lamentations over her crucifix,\* her vestments, and (the most cutting of all) her dislike of Bishops and priests having wives. Her own changing views may be read in the letters of De Quadra, in Froude's last two volumes. But the views of Bishop Gueste have been made so much of by Dr. Pusey and Bishop Forbes of Brechin, that I was very anxious to read some of his works in order to satisfy myself whether much weight is to be attached to his Letter which they so triumphantly quote as the certain proof that the 28th Article, of which he was the Author, affirms instead of denying the Real Presence.

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\* It must be confessed she was hard to please. Poor Dean Nowell offended her by a New Year's Gift of a Prayer Book with pictures in it; and some time afterwards when preaching against images she ordered him to "Hold, no more of that."

Strype† has preserved a letter of Bp. Gueste to Cecil, explaining the reason of the changes from the first Prayer Book of Edward VI. He defends the discontinuance of the Eucharistic *Vestments*. "Because it is sufficient to use but a surplice in baptising, reading, preaching, and praying, therefore it is enough for the celebrating the Communion. For if we should use another garment herein, it should seem to teach us, *that higher and better things be given by it, than be given by the other service; which we must not believe, &c.*"

How is this consistent with any true faith in the Real Presence? On other points his doctrine is equally unsatisfactory, *e.g.* "That *Praying for the Dead* is not now used in the Communion, because it doth seem to make for the Sacrifice of the Dead. And also because, as it is used in the First Book, it makes some of the faithful to be in heaven, and to send us mercy; and some of them to be in another place, and to lack mercy. As though they were not all alike redeemed, and brought to heaven by Christ's merits."

I think I have said enough to shew that it was not without reason that I came to the conclusion that England in the 16th century fell away from the faith of the early Church in the Real Presence of our Lord Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist. Here was a full and adequate cause of all my own misgivings and the unsuccessful attempts of good men to bring back the lost faith without the word *Transubstantiation*. It might be asserted that down to the year 1850 the Church of England as a body believed in Baptismal regeneration, but from her very foundation in Archbishop Parker she has never believed in the Real Presence. Individuals then could retain their private views, and so they may now; but it is,

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† Appendix, No. xiv.

and always has been ever since the separation from Rome, allowable, aye and much more than that, for any one of her clergy to deny publicly that our blessed Lord is really present in the Anglican Sacrament. And yet it is thought unkind of Catholics to express a doubt of the validity of Anglican Orders! Is it possible that Christ would thus commit Himself to a body of men who avowedly disbelieve in His presence?

The Church of England possesses the external organization of a hierarchy and priesthood, the form of Baptism, Confirmation, Absolution, and the Eucharist. Individuals believe in the realities to which these forms witness; but the body, whether of bishops, clergy or laity, do not believe. They "have a form of godliness, but deny the power thereof." The Apostle's words sounded in my ears, "*From such turn away.*"

5. The fact of the Church of England being in heresy opened upon me more fully the more deeply I studied the *History of the Reformation*. That history also made it very clear to me how she fell into heresy, and how she had lost all power of recovering the truths which have been and are being one by one wrested from her. I had recourse only to Protestant writers and public documents, but they made me see very distinctly that the one cause and root of all the confusion and destruction of faith and discipline in England was the separation from the Holy See.\*

Henry VIII. chose his time and opportunity with consummate tact. If the accounts be true there was a strong feeling of exasperation in the country against the licentious manner in which many of the clergy and monks were openly

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\* I can only give a very brief outline of the facts which the study of the public documents forced upon me. If the reader will consult the Statutes of the Realm and the Papers printed by Strype, he will have a much clearer sense of what I only touch upon briefly here.

living\* ; and the clergy, partly out of fear of Parliament, partly out of a cringing terror of the savage cruelty of the tyrant who had already entangled them in the snares of *Præmunire*, threw themselves in abject submission at his feet, and while they anticipated his wishes by recommending separation from Rome, pledged themselves never to meet in Synod, nor to enact any Canons without the King's approval. They also petitioned him to revise or annul the existing Canons as he thought fit.†

Probably they had no conception of what they had done. To appease the wrath of a king they had given up to him the keys of the kingdom of heaven. But some were not so blinded. The aged Archbishop Warham, before he laid down upon his death-bed, wrote a solemn protest against all that had been done or might be done "in derogation of the Pope of Rome."‡ Fisher, Bishop of Rochester, opposed each successive Act§ by which Henry proceeded to erase the name of the Pope out of the prayers, and books, and even the hearts of men. Every Bishop and priest was to preach openly against the Bishop of Rome's authority, and the sheriffs were commanded to see that the work was thoroughly done. A traitor's death was the only alternative. The grey head of Cardinal Fisher was laid upon the block, and the great Sir Thomas More gave up his life rather than deny what he well knew to be the foundation of Christian unity.|| The sweet and blameless lives of the Charter-house monks could not save them from a cruel death, when they were unable to cast off their ancient faith.

Henry and his Bishops had conceived the dream which

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\* See Supplication of the Commons, A.D. 1532.

† See Collier Eccl. Hist. Part II., Book 1. Their address is preserved by Strype. App. No. XLII.

‡ Burnet gives it at length. Collect. Part III., Book 2., No. 23.

§ The repetition of these Acts and their increasing severity show how deeply rooted the Papacy was in the faith of England.

|| See his last letter to Cromwell.

floats even yet before the eyes of Anglicans. England was to have a Church of her own,\* she was to set all nations an example of piety and orthodoxy. Even Gardiner, Heath, and Tunstall sat at the feet of this new Solomon, and learned new lessons in theology†; while they executed his bidding by burning as heretics those who did not believe as he believed, and hanging as traitors those who differed from him on Church Government. In 1538, Cranmer tried Friar Forrest for saying, "that Peter and his successors be heads of the universal Church and standing stubbornly to it;" pronounced this belief which had been the faith of England for above a thousand years to be heresy; and the poor Friar was burned alive in chains at Smithfield, Latimer preaching at the execution.‡

But the visions of these faithless Bishops of an exclusive Anglican Church in which they were to have supreme power, were rudely dispelled. The Commissioners, who visited the Monasteries in preparation for their spoliation and dissolution, began by suspending all the Bishops, "lest," as they explained it, "the Bishops if they had always enjoyed this jurisdiction without any interruption, would (as in manner they do already) have supposed and reckoned, they had received the same from elsewhere, than from the King's highness; it seemed to us good that they should be driven by this means to agnize their author, spring, and fountain. . . . . That they and all other may understand him to be the head power within this realm under God: and that no jurisdiction proceedeth within the same but from him." §

On Edward's accession they were required to resign their bishoprics, and sue for them again by supplication. When Henry's strong hand was in the grave there was nothing to restrain Cranmer and his associates from introducing their

\* "God give us grace to yield due thanks to our Lord God, the God of England; or rather, an English God, if we will consider and ponder His proceedings with us."—Latimer to Cromwell.

† Burnet's Collect., Add. No. x, xl., Tonstall; Pt. III., Bk. 2, No. 34; Bk. 3, No. 70, &c.

‡ Froude's History.

§ Leigh and Ap. Rice to Cromwell. Strype App., No. 57.

heretical opinions, and those who opposed them were deprived and imprisoned. Henry had trampled down with fire and sword the Catholic spirit which rose up to withstand his will, but anarchy and crime of every description ran riot under the corrupt and weak government of those who misruled England in the name of the poor boy King Edward VI.\*

The whole nation welcomed Mary to the throne, and before a single order had gone forth, the Catholic religion was restored throughout the length and breadth of England. Those who had been enriched by the spoliation of the Monasteries trembled for their ill-gotten gains, and put every hindrance they could in the way of return to Catholic Unity. But the will of the nation and of the Queen was not to be resisted, and amid the rejoicings of a happy people on the 30th of November, St. Andrew's Day, 1554, the Queen, King, Lords, and Commons of England were publicly absolved from the chain of excommunication, and reconciled to the Holy Roman Church; only two members of the House of Commons refusing to join in the petition for absolution. †

Alas! human nature is the same in the Catholic Church as out of it. Those very Bishops‡ whose time-serving compliance had suffered England to fall into schism, sought to prove their own orthodoxy by persecuting, not only the reforming clergy whose treason had already placed them outside the protection of the law, but the poor ignorant souls who had been seduced into heresy for lack of instruction. In vain did the Spanish ecclesiastics, from the very first, protest against this cruel spirit of false zeal. || If even Apostles once knew not what manner of spirit they were of, and forgot that the Son of Man was not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them; it is not to be wondered at

\* See Froude's account, Vol. v.

† Strype III., 304.

‡ Gardiner as Chancellor presided at the opening of the Court. I only give my impressions from reading the History in Protestant authorities. I have not as yet read any Catholic historian of these times.

|| E. g. Alphonso di Castro, confessor to Philip. Strype III. 308.

that even the holy and gentle Cardinal Pole in his horror at the he resy which had wrought such evil in his beloved country, seems to have been led, against the expressed sentiments of his first instructions to his clergy, to give his approval\* to these violent proceedings, which have left a stain upon the Catholic Religion in the minds of Englishmen, which the lapse of 300 years has not yet effaced.

The more I reflected upon the events of the 16th century, the stronger became my conviction that the Smithfield fires were the principal cause of England's falling from the Catholic Faith. No doubt, our insular pride, resenting Spanish and Italian influence, was flattered by the idea of England having a religion of her own. But it is impossible to account for the establishment of Protestantism under Elizabeth with so little resistance, when three-fourths of the nation were Catholic, and the whole body of Clergy were opposed to the change, unless there had been some stronger and deeper reason than the dislike of Spain, or the exasperation at the loss of Calais. The people of England with their sense of fair play would not have tamely submitted to see innocent priests in hundreds murdered by disembowelling under the savage laws of Elizabeth for no other crime than that of hearing confessions and saying Mass, unless there had been a deep feeling that this butchery was the awful retribution for the cruelties which they had witnessed under the administration of Gardiner and Bonner.

These are no new opinions suggested by the celebrated speech of Count Montalembert, at Malines. I had learned long ago from Ganganelli afterwards Pope Clement XIV., that "far from the Church abhorring that toleration which protects the persons without winking at the false doctrines of heretics, it has always been her doctrine, and that such men cannot be harrassed without a departure from her maxims.

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\* See his Commission to Harpsfield, dated May 29th, 1558.



..... Charity ought to be the characteristic of Catholics ; because it is inseparable from unity, and he is destitute of that virtue who loveth not all mankind with sincerity, or who suffers the natural aversion he ought to have for errors, to inspire him with hatred against the persons of their maintainers."\* I had read the cause of the success of Protestantism in the well-known work of the Catholic Moehler : " Doubtless examples enough can be alleged of priests, bishops, and popes, who, in the most unconscionable and unjustifiable manner, have failed to discharge their duty, when it was quite in their power to bring about a reform of morals ; or, who, by their own scandalous conduct and lives, have extinguished the still glimmering torch, which they ought to have kindled. *Hell hath swallowed them up.* Avowals of this kind Catholics must not shrink from : it would be even idle to attempt to elude them, for the Protestants themselves furnish an irrefragable proof of the state of manifold neglect into which the people had fallen during the 15th century. Never would a system of doctrine like theirs have sprung up, still less have obtained such wide diffusion, had individual teachers and priests been faithful to the duties of their calling. Truly the ignorance could not have been slight, on which a system of faith, like that of the Reformers, was imposed as worthy of acceptance ; and thus Protestants may learn to estimate the magnitude of the evil, which then oppressed the Church, by the magnitude of the errors into which they themselves have fallen. This is the point at which Catholics and Protestants will, in great multitudes, one day meet, and stretch a friendly hand one to the other. Both conscious of guilt, must exclaim ' We all have erred—it is the Church alone which cannot err ; we all have sinned—the Church alone is spotless on earth.' "†

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\* Discourse on the *Spirit of the Church*. Ganganelli's *Letters* have been disputed, but I have never seen any reasons urged against the authenticity of his *Discourses*.

† Moehler's *Symbolism* ; Robertson's Translation, Vol. II., p 31, 32.

The importance of the subject must be my excuse for this long digression. The historical facts of the first year of Elizabeth speak for themselves. Let any one read those facts and then ask himself—did Rome cause the schism of England, or did not England cut herself off from Rome? It is a favourite assertion, but without the slightest foundation in history, that the Church of England reformed herself, and then Rome separated from her. The journals of the House of Lords, and still more the speeches of the Bishops which are to be found in Hansard's Parliamentary History shew the utter falsehood of this reckless assertion. The separation from Rome took place first by the revival of Henry VIII's Acts of Supremacy, as the Lords were plainly warned by Archbishop Heath; and the so-called Reformation in doctrine took place afterwards by the passing of the Act of Uniformity. And in neither of these Acts did the then Church of England participate. The Bishops, some of whom had failed in the time of Henry, had now learned what the Acts of Supremacy really meant; and without one single dissentient voice the whole Episcopate of England refused to sanction, and all save one chose rather to go to prison, than to or obey either of those iniquitous laws.

I challenge any Anglican to dispute these facts, or the necessary consequence I was compelled to deduce from them.

6. I never could understand how the Validity of Anglican Orders in any way affected the question. I am not aware that the Arians, Nestorians, or Donatists, or any other schismatical body in ancient times ever appealed to their undoubted possession of a Valid Succession. Had I possessed the most infallible certainty about the validity of my own priesthood, I should have felt bound to take the step which I have taken just the same. The Catholic Church does not demand of those who submit to her any expression of opinion upon this point; and I cannot understand the pertinacity with which,

in defiance of scripture and of the practice of all Catholic antiquity, Anglicans uphold a theory of Apostolic succession wholly mechanical and independent of any succession of Apostolic Doctrine. It is simply self-deception to allow one's attention to be called off from the main principles of Catholic unity and truth by doubtful antiquarian disputations upon what happened to Archbishop Parker on December 17th, 1559, after the real matters at issue had been concluded.

7. There is a whole class of objections to the Catholic religion which it is impossible to answer separately, and yet which have greater influence with well-disposed persons than almost anything else : I mean those objections founded on the faults and crimes and superstitions of individual Catholics. "*By their fruits ye shall know them.*" Behold, they say, the fruits of the system ! This is very plausible at first sight, but a little consideration will shew its unreasonableness. By all means judge of the tree by its fruits, test the Catholic Church by the fruits she bears. But is it reasonable to judge of a fruit tree by the poisonous berries of a creeper that twines up its trunk ? Or are the foul birds of the air that lodge in the branches of the great Tree that covereth the whole earth, to be regarded as its legitimate produce ? If this be manifestly an unfair application of the test, how is it to be applied ? The fruit is that which is the natural growth of the tree, and the fruit of the Church must be looked for not in the leaves of external profession, but in those who have had their exterior and interior life most exactly moulded by the precepts and counsels of the Church. And who are these but the Saints ?

It is a favourite fancy with some Protestants, unable otherwise to account for the transcendent holiness of such men as St. Bernard or St. Francis de Sales, that these became holy not *through* their system but in spite of it. I tried very hard to account for it in this way, but it would not do. I

could not but perceive that these men more than others extolled and venerated the Papacy, were more thoroughly imbued with the worship of Mary, and that Transubstantiation was the very life of their lives. If these essentially Roman Catholic principles were untrue, these enlightened men would have speedily discovered the deception. The more pious and devoted Protestants become, the more loosely does the system by which they are surrounded sit upon them, because it is felt to be something temporal and human. But the more holy a Catholic becomes, the more thoroughly he enters into every detail of the system, and the deeper and stronger hold it has upon his heart and life, because he becomes more intensely conscious that it is eternal and divine.

If this be the true application of "*By their fruits ye shall know them,*" the Catholic Church must be tested by the Saints, and by that noble army of Martyrs which is almost every year increased by some of her faithful and obedient children being called to join the palm-bearing throng. And then the sins of some of her sons, though they be priests, or prelates, or even occupants of the Holy See, will only witness more strongly to her divine character. To my mind the crimes imputed to Alexander VI. were among the strongest of all the proofs that the Papacy was divine.

In saying these things, I do not in the least intend to imply the truth of the sweeping charges that are brought against individuals, or bodies of Catholics. But, supposing for the sake of argument that every accusation brought against those who profess the Catholic religion be proved, the divine truth of that religion remains unshaken; and it is as impossible to convict the Catholic Church of sin as of error in doctrine.

One of the greatest hindrances to me individually was the bitter and contemptuous tone in which some converts spoke and wrote. I could not see that they were any the better

for their conversion ; and I was tempted to lay the fault of their hasty words upon the Church, and accused her unjustly of giving them the knowledge that puffeth up instead of the charity which edifieth. I could not, however, accuse all converts of this, or deny that some had wonderfully grown in grace since they had become Catholics.

8. Wholly distinct, however, from all theological or historical questions there were two considerations which weighed very much with me, and prevented my really investigating the subject fairly, or coming long ago to the conclusion at which by God's mercy I have now arrived. The first of these was the fact of men like Dr. Pusey, Mr. Keble, and others far more learned and devoted than myself being entirely free from the doubts which tormented me. How they can be so, knowing what they know, I cannot understand ; but there are things which God hath hid from the wise and prudent, and revealed unto babes ; and if He opened my eyes to see clearly that the ground upon which both I and they were standing was insecure, and would fail me in the last great day, I dared not rest satisfied with the assurance that *they* thought it was safe. They could not really answer for my soul ; although I know of Anglicans who do attempt to quiet many consciences by assuring people that they will answer for them at the judgment seat of Christ. It is a tremendous responsibility they are incurring : for "no man may deliver his brother, nor make agreement unto God for him. For it cost more to redeem their souls, so that he must let that alone for ever." Still the fact remains that these good men are willing to incur such a responsibility. How, if the Church of Rome is right, can their position be accounted for ? Catholics and Protestants who do not know them think them dishonest : but no one really acquainted with them can think so for a moment.

The following thoughts presented themselves to my mind,

and may possibly commend themselves to others. Most candid persons will admit that the Oxford movement was a genuine attempt to make the Prayer Book the expression of the religious feeling of England. It was felt that the people of England had sunk very far below that standard, and the difficulty was, as it still is with every earnest Anglican, how to raise the religious mind of our countrymen so that the Prayer Book shall be its true exponent. Plainly, nothing but divine principles could effect this. A bold and honest search for the old paths was made. The Fathers were carefully studied and translated; and their teaching on the Sacraments and other great doctrines was published, adopted, and systematised. But no Catholic truth stands alone, the very reception of one creates a longing for others. Nothing but the whole truth in all its fullness as it is in Jesus can satisfy the wants of man. Accordingly the tide of the Oxford movement, starting from the simplest Christian principles, carried men forward even against their will far beyond the artificial limits of Anglicanism into the wide ocean of the Catholic faith. The re-establishment of the Catholic hierarchy was an unexpected fulfilment of the motto of the *Library of the Fathers*: "YET SHALL NOT THY TEACHERS BE REMOVED INTO A CORNER ANY MORE, BUT THINE EYES SHALL SEE THY TEACHERS." Isaiah xxx. 20. And yet the Prayer Book has been all along the ladder up which men have climbed to the Church from which our fathers fell 300 years ago. There seemed to me a beautiful retributive justice in this. That, as England, once Catholic, had descended to Protestantism by the means of the Prayer Book, so in almost every case it is by the Prayer Book that we have been led, and we trust our countrymen will be led, up to Catholicism again. And if this be a true view of the case, one does not see how the work which God is bringing about could possibly be effected, except by really good and learned men being able honestly to take their stand at different steps of the ladder which reaches from

mere Protestantism up to the Catholic Church, in order to hand on souls led by the Spirit from strength to strength until before the God of Gods appeareth every one of them in Zion.

It is remarkable, that, while there is hardly a village throughout the length and breadth of England where God is not raising up witnesses for Catholic doctrine and practice ; the Church of England in which this great work is going on, is *as a body*, becoming year by year more manifestly weak and corrupt. Dr. Pusey wrote, soon after the Gorham decision, "The re-affirmation of the doctrine impugned is essential to the Church, to remedy past evils. It would be suicidal on the part of the Church to obtain no security for the future." And again, "If the Church were perseveringly to remain altogether silent under that judgment, she would give her sanction to it. *More than this, she would really and in truth make it her own.* It is ever so. Maxims stated, and not contradicted, are tacitly adopted. They become received. I do not define in what time this would be."\* So we are to wait until the learned Author pronounces his judgment that the Church of England has become heretical ! But, I ask, has the doctrine been re-affirmed ? Have not rather other doctrines been impugned — those very doctrines mentioned as unassailable in this work of Dr. Pusey's ? What is this but the warning to all who have been awakened by the Catholic revival, and directed to the one City of Refuge, that the Anglican body is no longer a safe habitation : "Arise ye and depart for this is not your rest, because it is polluted ?"

Another fact, which made me hesitate a long time about abandoning my position in the Anglican Communion was the reality of the grace I saw given to penitent sinners after my own and other's absolutions. I fully believe in the reality of

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\* Royal Supremacy, p. 193, 260.

that grace now, although I am quite certain I had no power to give Absolution. But those who came to me with sincere and contrite hearts knew nothing of any other priesthood than that of the Church of England. Had God sent them empty away, they would probably have disbelieved in His promises, for it would never have occurred to them to seek a Catholic priest. He who hath compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way, saw that they were seeking Him in the only way they knew of: and it is no new thing with Him to give more than either we desire or deserve.

And now, dear friends, I think I have said enough to shew that I have not lightly and without due consideration left the Church of England. It was not until I had exhausted every reasonable hope of having my difficulties explained that I determined to hear what a Roman priest had to say about the Catholic religion. I wrote on September 30th, to Dr. Newman, of the Oratory, and stated my wish to see and hear for myself what Roman Catholics really believed and practised. I had no previous acquaintance with him beyond public report that he did not attempt to urge people beyond their convictions, and a letter I had seen of his to a friend, explaining a point of Catholic teaching. The frank and open way in which, in reply to me, he went fully into my difficulties, not glossing them over, but allowing them their full force, soon convinced me that there was nothing to conceal; but that Truth, now as in Tertullian's day, fears nothing so much as not to be known. I began, with many unreasonable misgivings, to attend the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, and soon perceived how totally different a thing the Catholic religion is from the highest form of Anglicanism. By the time I reached the Oratory my difficulties were at an end. The Church, who had been my Mother ever since my Baptism, stood before me in her calm still majesty speaking with the voice of her Lord, "Of what sin, of what error have you convinced me? and if



I say the truth why do you not believe me?" My answer was given in the most public and solemn manner that was in my power, as I have stated above. And every day, as fresh glory and beauty dawns upon my soul, as I learn more and more that I am "come unto Mount Sion, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and Church of the first-born which are written in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant, and to the Blood of sprinkling"\* —as all these begin to be realised, I find myself continually crying out with S. Augustine: "Too late have I known Thee! too late have I loved Thee, O Thou Beauty of ancient days, yet ever new!" And in my own feeble measure, the wound of my own individual schism from the Church being closed, while I thank God for all He taught me before, I experience the literal fulfilment of the promise: "The light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be seven-fold as the light of seven days, in the day when the Lord bindeth up the breach of His people, and healeth the stroke of their wound."†

And in conclusion, my dear friends, you especially who consider that you owe something to me, under God, I have been conscious all through my painful investigations, that I was seeking for the answers to questions that disturb many true and earnest souls besides my own. If I may use the words without presumption, "I have not laboured for myself only, but for all them that seek wisdom."‡ The perplexities which you labour under I have felt for years, and now I know the solution of them. You know that this act of mine lays a responsibility upon you which you cannot get away from. It may be easy to find fault with me, my conduct, or my reasons; but you cannot deny that *possibly* I may have done right. God the Holy

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\* Hebrew xii., 22, 24.

† Isaiah xxx. 26.

‡ Eccles. xiv., 34. j

Ghost is bearing witness, by the act of every convert to the Catholic Church, to the conscience of all his friends, and bidding them examine their own position. "Wherefore are ye slow and what say you of these things, seeing your souls are very thirsty."\* She who is my Mother and yours by our Baptism, who has taught me the true solution of all my difficulties, is your appointed Teacher too. She is the pillar and ground of the truth. "My heart was troubled in seeking her, therefore have I got a good possession." "Put your neck "also" under the yoke, and let your soul receive instruction, she is hard at hand to find."† You are seeking amid those who themselves are seeking, and have not found the truth, as it is in Jesus, which maketh free. You ask, like one of old, sincere as you—Can any good thing come out of Rome? My only reply is—Do not take other people's views of what she is, but ask her own priests. Come and see. And the Spirit and the Bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst, Come. And whosoever will, let him take of the Water of Life freely.

Believe me, my dear friends, with sincere gratitude for all your kindness to me,

Your faithful and affectionate Servant in Christ,

W. R. BROWNLOW.

*The Oratory, Birmingham, Advent, 1863.*

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\* Eccclus. LI., 24.

† Ib., 21, 26.

16 FEB 64.













